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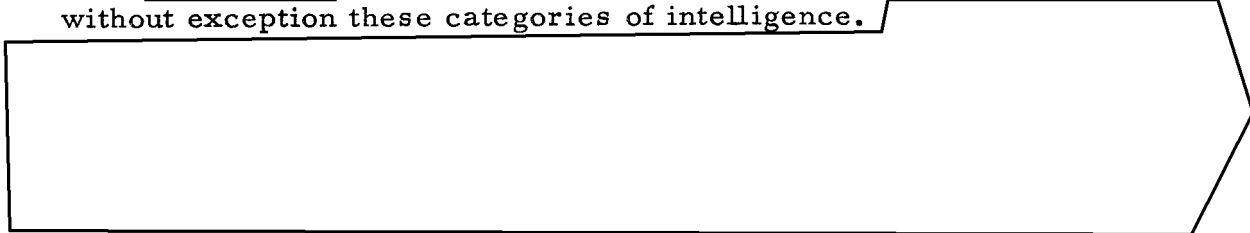
MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Requirements for Sociological, Political,  
and Economic Intelligence in the NIS

REFERENCE: My memorandum to DDCI, subject,  
"An Examination of Possible Budgetary Reduction  
in the NIS Program" dated 17 November 1958

1. It is my understanding that, in addition to the budgetary aspects of the NIS program discussed in reference memorandum, you wish my views on the retention in the NIS of the more fluid categories of intelligence such as Sociological, Political, and Economic, which are more difficult to keep up to date. The problem of maintenance is, of course, relative, since all aspects of basic intelligence coverage in the NIS require re-evaluation and revision as the result of new information, changing circumstances, or additional intelligence requirements. Nevertheless, the NIS was constituted with encyclopedic requirements under the assumption that it would be produced and maintained as necessary to support the national security. The question of whether or not those more fluid categories of intelligence should be retained in the NIS, therefore, bears more on the need for having such basic intelligence than on the problem of its maintenance.

2. The need for sociological, political, and economic basic intelligence was carefully examined by the ad hoc interdepartmental committee convened in 1947 by the DCI for the purpose of formulating the NIS program. This committee examined all previous and existing U.S. [ ] basic intelligence programs, and found they included without exception these categories of intelligence.



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3. The growing complexities of the U.S. Government require common understanding of foreign peoples, their governments and economies, by key officials concerned with the development and implementation of foreign and defense policy, planning, and operations. This understanding cannot be obtained from the intermittent coverage of current intelligence concerned with the trouble spots of the world, nor from staff studies or estimates focused on the more critical situations. The knowledge derived from them is limited in scope, incomplete in depth, and concerned with the immediate problem and its solution.

4. The Sociological, Political, and Economic Chapters of the NIS have been firmly endorsed in the replies to every NIS use questionnaire, and by both Executive and Congressional appointed Commissions concerned with U.S. Intelligence. Replies from some Foreign Service posts have noted that NIS political intelligence, and to a lesser extent sociological and economic, does not always reflect the current situation, particularly in areas of marked transition. No serious users of the NIS, however, have ever questioned the NIS requirements -- they simply want them more current so they may use one authoritative source for the full picture. In other words, the users of the NIS, including all echelons from top to bottom, want more from the program, not less.

5. Adequate maintenance of these more fluid categories of intelligence in the NIS can be accomplished providing, a) there is clear distinction between the functions of basic intelligence and current intelligence, and b) there is reasonable staff support consistently directed to this end. Basic intelligence should properly treat of the fundamental sociological, political, and economic situations in foreign countries and areas. So long as the fundamental political system continues in Country X, for example, it is not in the province of basic intelligence to delineate the current political ebb and flow. On the other hand, fundamental changes in the constitutional system, foreign policy, or leadership, would necessitate maintenance production as soon as the direction and extent of the fundamental changes were generally appreciated. In this context I consider the problem of adequate production and maintenance of the sociological, political, and economic intelligence in the NIS, largely the responsibility of the Department of State, can be satisfactorily accomplished by the presently authorized staffs, were they fully constituted of competent area and topical specialists consistently devoting their efforts wholly to NIS work.

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6. It is my conclusion that the present requirements of the NIS relating to sociological, political, and economic intelligence are sound and necessary to the proper development of world-wide basic intelligence. The need for this intelligence is so vital that if it is not done through the NIS program, it will be done at the departmental level throughout the government, as was the prevailing situation before the NIS was developed. To repeat a point that apparently is too frequently overlooked:

The NIS program does not of itself create new requirements, but incorporates in one package the separate and combined requirements of the several intelligence agencies. In lieu of the NIS, these requirements would be or should be done by the agencies themselves. The logic of such a single coordinated program stems from a) the elimination of unnecessary duplication of effort, if left to the individual agencies; b) the refinement of intelligence requirements to meet both national and departmental objectives; and c) the consistent, planned development of comprehensive basic intelligence on all foreign areas in the interest of national security.



Assistant Director  
Basic Intelligence

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